



# MEMORANDUM

CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
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TO: Planning Board Members

FROM: Kenneth A. Mix, Planning and Community Development Coordinator

SUBJECT: Adopting a New Zoning Map

DATE: January 28, 2016

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The City's official zoning map is a mylar map that is several decades old. This map was kept up to date until the late 1990's by hand using drafting equipment. After computer mapping with the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) became available, the mylar map was not kept up to date. Zoning information has been kept electronically in recent years in GIS with the mylar map being used as a reference. The electronic mapping has given us the ability to produce color paper maps at any scale and to provide the information on the City's website.

As discussed with the Planning Board last year, the City's GIS Division updated the City's official tax maps so that they are based in GIS software and no longer based in AutoCAD software. This change has produced more accurate tax maps, but our existing GIS zoning layer does not overlay on the new tax maps very accurately. The entire zoning layer had to be updated to reflect the changes in the new base layer.

Staff proposed to the Planning Board and City Council last year that while adjusting the zoning districts to fit the new tax parcel maps, we also make other small changes to the map to address areas having split zoning designations to make the zoning districts match the parcel boundaries. On January 6, 2015, the Planning Board recommended that the City Council proceed with changing split parcels. The City Council agreed on January 12<sup>th</sup> that staff should proceed.

We looked at every split parcel. There are 431 of them. 369 of them are proposed to be changed. None of the proposed changes should have a negative impact on the property owner. In most cases, the more liberal district is the one being expanded. We avoided making large adjustments, especially where the changes would have allowed a less restrictive zoning district (i.e. commercial) to encroach too far into a more restrictive district (i.e. residential). We also did not change parcels that have been the subject of public controversy in the past.

You may also note that the Black River has been filled in with the Waterfront District. The tax maps in the past were drawn so that parcels stopped at the river's edge, regardless of what the deeds said. That policy has changed and parcel boundaries are now drawn

into the riverbed if stated in the deeds when that information becomes available to us. All of the parcels in the river have not been adjusted yet, but since the zoning map is being redone it is a good time to zone the entire river.

There are two maps with this memo. One of them shows the current zoning and the other shows the proposed changes and identifies the split parcels that are not changed. Staff is requesting that the Planning Board, if satisfied with it, recommend to the City Council that it adopt the "Proposed Zoning Map" as the official "Zoning Map of the City of Watertown, New York". Once the Planning Board makes a recommendation, it will be presented to the City Council for adoption.

cc: City Council Members  
Robert J. Slye, City Attorney  
Matthew Owen, GIS Coordinator  
Brian Drake, Civil Engineer II